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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE HOLY FOOL ARCHETYPE IN THREE AUTHORS

by



JACOB RUHL

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and  
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance,  
a thesis entitled The Holy Fool Archetype in Three Authors,  
submitted by Jacob Ruhl in partial fulfillment of the  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the nature and function of the holy fool archetype in the work of three authors of different religious beliefs: Isaac Bashevis Singer, a Jew; Flannery O'Connor, a Roman Catholic; and Fyodor Dostoevsky, a Russian Orthodox. Two holy fool heroes portrayed by each author in the following pairs of stories are considered: "Gimpel the Fool" and The Slave; Wise Blood and The Violent Bear It Away; The Idiot and The Brothers Karamazov. As an aid to understanding this archetype, the discussion correlates C.G. Jung's theory of the collective unconscious and posits the figure of Christ as the highest manifestation of the archetype.

An attempt is made to probe the nature and relationship of the archetype's folly and his holiness and to detect the function he performs.



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## INTRODUCTION

Since archetypal studies of literature can trace a multitude of patterns under such categories as characters, situations, symbols, and associations,<sup>1</sup> this study necessarily limits itself to one specific character archetype: the holy fool. Another limitation is necessary because such a study can lead far afield into non-literary areas of religion and anthropology; specialist discussion of these areas is also excluded. The literary sources are confined primarily to works of three authors: Fyodor Dostoevsky, Flannery O'Connor, and Isaac Bashevis Singer. A common archetype in the art of these somewhat disparate authors arouses interest in archetypal theory postulating the existence of a collective unconscious mind. Thus, as an aid to understanding the nature and function of the holy fool, I will attempt to correlate C.G. Jung's theories concerning the human psyche to the literary archetype.

Modern man, although encompassed by astounding scientific discoveries and achievements, presumably products of an intensified consciousness, is paradoxically forced to admit that absurdities are more than ever apparent in human existence. These absurdities of life were earlier perceived by Dostoevsky who in The Brothers Karamazov has Ivan say, ". . . The world stands on absurdities,





and perhaps nothing would have come to pass without them." Like Dostoevsky, O'Connor and Singer in their contemporary characters portray the grotesque, the irrational, and the inexplicable in human life. What kind of a modern hero can cope with the paradoxes, the irreconcilables, and the grotesqueries which face all of us? This question, I suggest, is one that these writers attempt to answer. Unlike Camus, Beckett, Sartre and some other modern proponents of the absurd whose heroes succumb to futility and nihilistic resignation, the formerly mentioned writers create heroes whose struggles for meaning are rewarded with some form of faith or affirmation. These heroes have archetypal aspects; that is, they specifically resemble holy fools who have recurred in life and literature in and since ancient times.

While Jung does not specifically refer to a holy fool archetype, he seems to suggest such an archetype whose source is traced to the figure of the trickster in American Indian mythology.<sup>2</sup> But before expanding on Jung's psychological assessment of the trickster-figure, a brief summary of his theory<sup>3</sup> relevant to this assessment of the trickster and to this entire discussion is necessary.

Jung believes the human psyche generally has two kinds of contents: conscious and unconscious. The nature of the conscious contents is in part personal in the sense that such



contents have no universal validity; that is, they express individuality "which selects, and sets limits to, the components adopted as personal." But the conscious contents are also in part impersonal, that is collective, by nature of the fact that they are recognized as universally valid to all humans. The unconscious contents are in part also personal, for they are contents which were once conscious but were forcefully forgotten or repressed. However when they become conscious again "their universality is in consequence wholly unrecognized." The unconscious contents are also in part impersonal; that is, they are components recognized as impersonal, "as having quite general value, and of which it is impossible to prove any anterior or even relative consciousness." Such impersonal unconscious content is, according to Jung, the core of a collective unconscious that is inherited like physiological attributes and not based upon any principle of experience. Jung emphasizes that he does not mean the inheritance of ideas but the

inherited powers of human imagination as it was from time immemorial. The fact of this inheritance explains the truly amazing phenomenon that certain motifs from myths and legends repeat themselves the world over in identical forms. It also explains why it is that our mental patients can reproduce exactly the same images and associations that are known to us from the old texts. I give some examples of this in my book Symbols of Transformation. In so doing I do not by any means assert the inheritance of ideas, but only of the possibility of such ideas, which is something very different.<sup>4</sup>



The impersonal or collective conscious contents together with the impersonal or collective unconscious contents constitute the psychological non-ego which is the image of the object or what Jung calls the object-imago. In analysis these contents appear as projections or feelings or judgments which are "a priori collective, and identical with the object-imago and it is only a posteriori that they are recognized as subjective psychological qualities."

Standing in opposition to the non-ego contents is the grouping of the conscious personal and unconscious personal contents Jung calls the persona. The conscious personal contents constitute the conscious ego, while "the unconscious personal [contents]" constitute the 'self', the unconscious or subconscious ego." The combination of conscious ego and unconscious ego constitute the persona which stands opposed to the non-ego. But when ego contents belonging to different individuals are brought into general comparison, there is a great resemblance between these contents, indicating collective aspects in personal individuality or persona. Therefore, Jung perceives the persona, despite its opposing tendency to the non-ego, as a component of the collective psyche along with the psychological non-ego. According to Jung, the persona is a mask hiding our real selves and is often mistaken for individuality, while in fact it is a collective phenomenon.





The unconscious personal contents, the instinctive or undesirable manifestations of every person, constitute what Jung calls the shadow.<sup>5</sup> It holds all the primitive desires and impulses that are incompatible with civilized ideals and personality and that are normally repressed. The shadow also personifies itself as a devil or inferior person whom we dislike and is often thus projected in dreams and archetypes. But the shadow is personal only as far as our own shortcomings are concerned; since it is common to all, it is a collective phenomenon. Jung uses the simple term shadow because it implies the presence of light, otherwise there would be no shadow. Consequently, for Jung, the shadow does not have a merely dark and negative function but a positive one that enlightens and makes redemption possible through tolerance and love.<sup>6</sup>

Deeper in the unconscious, in the impersonal or collective unconscious, Jung hypothesizes the anima: a complementary feminine element in the male unconscious; and the animus: a complementary masculine element in the feminine unconscious. The anima in a man's life projects itself in women, in creative activity, in fantasies, in moods and in emotional outbursts. Religiously and creatively the anima has been projected as archetypes in the form of goddesses, virgins, the Great Mother and various ideas of rebirth and regeneration. On the other hand, the animus is projected as masculine qualities





or dispositions in women and archetypally as men, like the unknown wanderer or the wise old man.<sup>7</sup>

The presence of opposites in the psyche serves as a self-regulatory function; for the psyche is a dynamic system kept in motion by libido, Jung's term for psychic energy.<sup>8</sup> This energy can be thought of as electricity flowing between positive and negative poles. The greater the tension between these opposites, the greater the energy. The forward movement of energy to satisfy conscious needs is called progression and the backward movement to satisfy unconscious needs is regression. Regression is just as normal as progression because, after a forward flow of energy reaches an extreme, the regulatory function requires a normal regressive or backward flow. The abnormalities that impede the normal flow of psychic energy are the barriers created by certain repressions or by the failure of conscious adjustments, in which cases regressive flows of energy will overcharge the unconscious to the extent that it will force some outlet in the form of psychoses. In more serious cases where no outlet is found, the suicidal tendency appears in the psychotic state. This tendency becomes a pathological regression in contrast to normal functional regression necessary to well-being. Excessive energy in the psyche after a gestation period in the unconscious is transferred to creative symbolism, archetype or other cultural manifestations such as ritual. Such



symbols, archetypes, and rituals emanating from the collective unconscious appeal to our unconscious and have the salutary effect of directing excess libido away from harmful, aggressive behavior.<sup>9</sup>

Thus for Jung the unconscious mind is not only the repository of undesirable tendencies. Its amorphous and chaotic aspects perhaps reflect the absurd that man finds in human existence; but as the womb of consciousness, the unconscious has a positive function for the attainment of psychic adjustment by which life can be redeemed from meaningless absurdity. This psychic adjustment is Jung's concept of individuation, the attainment of the self. Such an attainment is archetypal and "is portrayed in dreams and visions by many and varied images, all of which may be called archetypes of the self."<sup>10</sup> Included in these are the symbol of the child and the highly differentiated figures of Christ and of Buddha.<sup>11</sup> I will attempt to show that the holy fool, too, is an archetype of the self, one kind of modern hero who eventually finds unequivocal meaning in life. In the course of his individuation, mystical elements seem to be involved in bringing about the normal progressive flow of psychic energy by which psychic harmony is achieved. The disparate contents of conscious personality and unconscious processes move towards integration around a sub-conscious centre, dissolving the persona and attaining the state



of true individuality.<sup>12</sup>

It is also relevant to recapitulate here Jung's theoretic contribution to the psychology of the conscious mind, familiarly known as his theory of psychological types.<sup>13</sup> He noted two typical attitudes or reactions to environment under which people could generally be classified -- extroverted and introverted. The former type is characterized by an outward flow of libido to the object and the latter by an inward flow within the subject. Of course, all people are subject to both attitudes, but usually one predominates. Actually his theory combines the opposing theories of Freud's external motivation and Adler's inner motivation attributed to a will-to-power, giving both theories attitudinal and behavioral validity. Freud's theory, according to Jung, is extroverted in its emphasis on environmental factors in character determination, while Adler's theory is introverted in its stress upon an inner attitude.

Jung says the mind is instinctively capable of using four conscious functions in adjusting to the environment: sensation which is perception through our senses, thinking which seeks meaning and understanding, feeling which is concern with human values and relationships, and intuition which is perception via the unconscious. Usually, however, the individual displays a most developed function which dominates by habit and which qualifies him as a special type in addition to the general





classification of extrovert and introvert. Feeling and thinking are rational functions while sensation and intuition are irrational functions. Artists, mystics, and spiritual visionaries are the introverted sensation or introverted intuition types whose unconscious perceptions are projected in various forms of artistic expression, in mystical experiences, in visions, and even in decision-making at a time of crisis. Such projections usually represent, according to Jung, archetypes of the collective unconscious.

I am aware that this highly abridged version of Jung's theory embodies obscurities, a condition which his theory in detail does not escape. However, it is not my purpose to justify his theory but rather to have it serve as an aid in elucidating the nature and function of a selection of holy fool heroes.

I stated earlier that Jung seems to imply that the archetype of the holy fool arises from a same psychological source as the mythological trickster-figure.<sup>14</sup> Since Jung views the trickster as an archetype of the shadow,<sup>15</sup> some explanation of his concept of the shadow is necessary. Jung says of the trickster-figure:





Anyone who belongs to a sphere of culture that seeks the perfect state somewhere in the past must feel very queerly indeed when confronted by the figure of the trickster. He is a forerunner of the savior, and, like him, God, man, and animal at once. He is both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and divine being, whose chief and most alarming characteristic is his unconsciousness. Because of it he is deserted by his (evidently human) companions, which seems to indicate that he has fallen below their level of consciousness. He is so unconscious of himself that his body is not a unity, and his two hands fight each other. He takes his anus off and entrusts it with a special task. Even his sex is optional despite the phallic qualities: he can turn himself into a woman and bear children. From his penis he makes all kinds of useful plants. This is a reference to his original nature as a Creator, for the world is made from the body of a god.<sup>16</sup>

This mythical picture of the trickster as "a primitive 'cosmic' being of divine-animal nature" has not disappeared in civilized times but has been refined by higher consciousness and "he can still be recognized in the carnival figures of Pölcinella and the clown." Jung also relates the rogueries of the trickster-figure in some measure to fool-figures in fairy tales: Tom Thumb, Stupid Hans, "or the buffoon-like Hanswurst, who is an altogether negative hero and yet manages to achieve through his stupidity what others fail to accomplish with their best efforts."<sup>17</sup> While source of amusement may be one reason why the myth continues to function, Jung is emphatic in pointing out that it is not the only one.



It looks, therefore, as if the trickster myth were actively sustained and fostered by consciousness. This may well be so, since that is the best and most successful method of keeping the shadow figure conscious and subjecting it to conscious criticism. Although, to begin with, this criticism has more the character of a positive evaluation, we may expect that with progressive development of consciousness the cruder aspects of the myth will gradually fall away, even if the danger of its rapid disappearance under the stress of white civilization did not exist. We have often seen how certain customs, originally cruel or obscene, became mere vestiges in the course of time.<sup>18</sup>

Jung's investigation further points out that under the process of civilization the trickster's behavior eventually becomes "useful and sensible." The holy fool is, I suggest, the highest conscious outgrowth of the trickster myth. The fool aspect or a certain grotesqueness in the nature of the holy fool is a "remnant of a collective shadow figure." His divine-like aspect is his holiness or spiritual compulsion. In other words the shadow is personalized, taking on human form and eventually transformed through the process of psychic individuation into an archetype of the self committed to a useful human function.

No serious investigation of the holy fool, however, can ignore the figure of Christ who, although representing a human incarnation of the divine, resembles the holy fool. This likeness is most apparent when the literary archetype displays unusual psychic harmony along with his peculiar simplicity. But it was precisely Christ's seemingly inferior aspect that prompted His fellow Jews to reject Him as the Messiah; they had, after all, anticipated an imposing Messiah of condescending divinity.



Awareness of the Christ figure and of the religious convictions of the chosen authors influence the organization of this dissertation. The order of the holy fools discussed will reflect historical religious development and consequently reverses the chronological order of the authors. I will first discuss two holy fool heroes of a contemporary Jew, Isaac Bashevis Singer; two of a Roman Catholic, Flannery O'Connor, deceased 1964; and finally two of a Russian Orthodox, Fyodor Dostoevsky. Thus the order of the literary works will be as follows: "Gimpel the Fool" (1957) and The Slave (1962); Wise Blood (1949) and The Violent Bear It Away (1958); The Idiot (1868) and The Brothers Karamazov (1880).



## CHAPTER I

### ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER: THE UNMASKING OF EVIL

Singer writes mainly about the cruelly vanquished community of Polish Jews and does so in the disappearing Yiddish language with direct, sensuous, simple narration. He enters the modern world through the back door of history.<sup>1</sup> His vision affirms the durability of the archetypal and mythical, for modern man is like these vanished people who experienced catastrophe and were overwhelmed with a savagery and grotesqueness authenticated by the Nazi war trials. His characters ask the same questions that afflict us: What is the meaning and purpose of life? Why must people suffer? Why are people so easily tempted to do evil to one another? Is there a God, and if so, what kind of Being is He, and how can men approach Him?<sup>2</sup> Singer does not posit an ordered and coherent universe but portrays the incongruities, paradoxes, absurd sufferings, and grating injustices at the heart of life; yet he does not omit occasions upon which man finds inexplicable grace. His simplicity and directness avoids ostentation and racial consciousness, which indicates a concern with "the enigmas of personal fate rather than with the collective experience of a chosen martyred people."<sup>3</sup> His modernism is palpable in his expression of sexuality, of the irrational, and







in expressionistic character distortions<sup>4</sup> which in effect somewhat resemble the techniques of black comedy.

Singer's archetypal characters gravitate toward the golden mean, between the extremes of religious pietism and rational humanism. By projecting the extremes as objective demonic forms symbolizing those dangerous thoughts and postures with which mankind sometimes identifies, he unmasks such preoccupations as demonic. The demons in his stories personify psychic extremes of both the irrational, rooted in the unconscious mind, and the rational, usually spiritual scepticism, attributable to the conscious mind. Singer admittedly believes in the reality of spirits which he incorporates in his fiction with a technique he calls "spiritual stenography." He says, "The demons and Satan represent to me, in a sense, the ways of the world. Instead of saying this is the way things happen, I will say this is the way demons behave."<sup>5</sup> This enables Singer to externalize to a great extent the inner life of his characters and to avoid involvement in complex psychological character development which would impede his simple, folk-tale narration.

In his story "Gimpel the Fool" the hero, Gimpel, at the outset is a natural fool with no saintly attributes; he is a simpleton, gullible and credulous, whom the people make the butt of their ridicule and eventually coerce into marriage with the



lame washerwoman, Elka. She is already an unwed mother and pregnant with a second son to whom she gives birth four months after her marriage to Gimpel. But Gimpel, without malice, assumes his paternal responsibility despite his suffering at the hands of Elka, a lecherous, promiscuous termagant who lets any man into her bed except Gimpel. Despite his bloody wounds he finds her pitch and sulphur orations "full of charm" and he "adored her every word." He thieves food from the bakery in which he labors so that she and her children are well provided. He becomes fondly attached to these children whom he obviously has not sired. On two occasions when he comes home unexpectedly from his nightly tasks at the bakery and finds another man in bed with Elka, he refrains from creating a disturbance in deference to the sleeping young ones. Over a "little thing" like adultery Gimpel thought "why frighten a little swallow?" Elka easily distracts his attention from her sleeping paramour by informing Gimpel the nanny goat has been sick. He immediately goes to attend the creature for which he had a "nearly human feeling," while Elka disposes of her bed-fellow.

With the use of the I-form, Singer draws the reader close to Gimpel whose touching human affection prevails over the buffets and absurdities he endures. He is the fool Enid Welsford<sup>6</sup> describes as "he who gets slapped but is none the worse



for the slapping." But Gimpel's resilience is attributable to something more than ego-less stupidity. This simple orphan raised by his grandfather without exposure to maternal love and care, subjected only to human contempt, finds within himself the power to love deeply his fellow creatures. His essence inexplicably reveals itself as a collective human love springing from some unconscious source. In his absurd adversity, he asks what many have asked when facing the human condition: "What's one to do?" With anti-Promethean acceptance, Gimpel simply perceives that "shoulders are from God, and burdens too." At first he seeks the rabbis' aid to extricate himself from his situation, but the legal answer of separation from Elka is averse to his deeper sense of human affection. Love persists in him like a redeeming spirit for Elka and the six bastard children she bears him before she dies in confessed penitence. Her death-bed remorse is not for her sexual digressions as such, but for her deception of poor Gimpel.

But Gimpel at this point has not yet discovered the deeper spiritual faith from which his affections spring. He experiences a conflict portrayed as a conscious demonic intrusion which exemplifies Singer's spiritual stenography:





One night, when the period of mourning was done, as I lay dreaming on the flour sacks, there came the Spirit of Evil himself and said to me, "Gimpel why do you sleep?"

I said, "What should I be doing? Eating kreplach?"

"The whole world deceives you," he said, "and you ought to deceive the world in your turn."

"How can I deceive all the world?" I asked him.

He answered, "You might accumulate a bucket of urine every day and at night pour it into the dough. Let the sages of Frampol eat filth."

"What about the judgment in the world to come?" I said.

"There is no world to come," he said. "They've sold you a bill of goods and talked you into believing you carried a cat in your belly. What nonsense!"

"Well then" I said, "and is there a God?"

He answered, "There is no God either."

"What," I said, "is there, then?"

"A thick mire."

He stood before my eyes with a goatish beard and horn, long-toothed, and with a tail. Hearing such words, I wanted to snatch him by the tail, but I tumbled from the flour sacks and nearly broke a rib. Then it happened that I had to answer the call of nature, and, passing, I saw the risen dough, which seemed to say to me, "Do it!" In brief, I let myself be persuaded. (21)

This objectified devil adopts the intellectual attitude of spiritual scepticism and provokes Gimpel into revenge for the cruelties he has suffered all his life, but he is rescued from his self-deception by the appearance of Elka in a mystical dream. She castigates him from the black depths of hell: "You fool! Because I was false, is everything false too? I never deceived anyone but myself" (22). Gimpel awakes with possession of a new truth which unmasks his diabolical spite and beckons him to the life of a saintly wandering beggar, telling stories of spiritual fantasy to the children of mankind. The halo he acquires is that of a redeemer, for he has redeemed Elka, who,





by acknowledgment of her guilt, in turn redeems him from spiritual scepticism. She subsequently appears in his dreams no longer confined to hell but in a redeemed spiritualized image of her earthly posture standing by the wash tub. With a platonic view that the present is only a shadow world, Gimpel awaits with joyful anticipation his removal to the true world where even he cannot be deceived.

Gimpel's plunge into saintliness with all its mysticism and desire for rebirth into the true world comes in the wake of his suffering. The apocalyptic experience reconciles the opposites in his conscious and unconscious mind so that his centre of personality seems to move closer to the source of spirituality in the unconscious mind. The change in Gimpel is remarkably parallel to Jung's concept of individuation<sup>7</sup> to which I have already referred.

But Gimpel's image of spiritual resignation and passive love is not Singer's final answer to the human situation. In his later major work, The Slave, Jacob, the hero of the novel and whom I suggest is an archetype of a holy fool, represents a deeper realization of human complexity with its more intensified consciousness opposing a relentless spiritual compulsion. The conflicts that beset Jacob's spiritual faith prevent his withdrawal into passivity even after he experiences apocalyptic truth.



Jacob, an educated Polish Jew of devout convictions, refuses to become a rabbi for which he seems eminently suited, and at the age of twenty-five, during the violent onslaught of the Chmielnicki massacres of Polish Jews, he is separated from his wife and two children in Josefov and sold into slavery to a Polish peasant in a remote mountain village. Jacob realizes he is not destined for martyrdom but accepts without rancour the privations Providence has sent him. Here in the Polish village among the idolatrous gentiles he could reach out his hand and actually "touch the darkness of Egypt, the void from which God's face was absent." Here Satan speaks contemptuously to him, "There is no God. There is no world beyond this one," and he urges him to become a pagan among pagans and submit to the powerful desire that Wanda, his master's daughter, arouses. But his spiritual convictions are strong, and even though he is aware that Judaism is based upon faith and not knowledge, "he sought to understand wherever it was possible" and to probe into such enigmas as the purpose of creation, and of pain, sin, and evil and why an omnipotent God permitted the agony of small children and the sacrifice of His people. Throughout his life Jacob is a lover of books and whenever he has occasion to come into contact with them, particularly in his later life, he indulges avidly.



This mixture of compulsive faith, instinctive passion, and probing intellectualism fosters his eccentricities and irreconcilable conflicts that in essence give an inexplicable vitality and affirmation to his life, more significantly to a life in its humblest submissiveness -- slavery. In his youth, his mother called him a "rattlebrain." As a peasant slave he makes no attempt to escape and to rejoin his wife and family but remains sleeping in the barn with the cattle he tends, talking to them as though they were human, and believing "At the end of days, they too must have salvation." He sees a dead white butterfly, and assuming it alive, feeds it a crumb of bread. Sorrow for this handsome creature that has only lived a day or less and never tasted sin overwhelms him as it rests on a stone like a shrouded corpse. The necessity to kill molesting flies and vermin, to step inadvertently on worms and toads, and to club threatening venomous snakes arouses his guilt as a murderer. Man, animal, bird, insect, and plant -- all spring from the same source of life, and as the plaintive song of a distant cowherd reaches his ears during the waking hour of this abundant pastoral life, it "pleaded and demanded, lamented the injustice visited on all living things! Jews, gentiles, animals, even the flies and gnats crawling on the hips of the cattle." His repugnance to the destruction of life constrains him to a meatless diet throughout his life; even





among his own Jewish folk he does not eat their fowl and fish. After he is ransomed and returned to Josefov, Jewish scholars address him as a simpleton and converse with him as they would with "bumpkins." In his temporary rehabilitation among his people he becomes the kindly teacher who hides the cat-o-nine tails from the sight of the children. Wherever he has been in his lifetime, in Zamosc, in Josefov, in the mountain village, in Pilitz or in Jerusalem he has always been the same. Here is a sketch of his later life in Jerusalem:

He had great patience with the weak but he resisted the strong. For long periods he could remain silent, but when he spoke it was always the truth. He had made long journeys to repay half a piastre. He dared defy armed Arabs or Turks. He took the most difficult tasks upon himself, carried the paralyzed, cleansed the louse-infected sick. Men avoided him, but pious women considered him a saint, one of the thirty-six righteous men who are the pillars of the world. (242)

These were the years after the death of his beloved gentile wife, years that reflect a voluntary servitude in which he prefers the difficult to the easy and amazes himself at "the burdens he required his body and soul to carry." In whatever town he finds himself, his altruism draws him to the poorhouses to help the old and the sick and to relieve their miseries as best he can.

His deep sense of active spiritual redemption asserts itself in the early period of his slavery. He has a Mosaic urge to redeem the pagans, who have enslaved him, from their idolatry by etching the commandments and moral laws of the Torah as he remembers them upon a rock. After he has scratched a third of them upon the rock, his progress is arrested by the shattering





consequences of his powerful sexual passions that the gentile Wanda arouses in him. This lust for a forbidden woman, this overwhelming conflict of sexuality and spirituality brings his project to failure. But Jacob does not submit to his passions impulsively; his submission, although characterized by an uneasy reconciliation of sexuality and spirituality, is perhaps a symbolic reconciliation of gentile and Jew which the functional essence of his archetypal creation seems ultimately to vindicate. Yet it is more than symbolic: Jacob's state is also one of personal tension. Jung says no less when he describes individuation as the elimination of tension between the personal unconscious, the need for physical gratification, and the deeper or collective unconscious that arouses a need for spiritual gratification. Even the ancient cult of shamanization, which required the shaman or medicine man to withdraw himself from masculine or sexual responsibility by transforming himself into effeminacy in order to acquire the mysterious and occult spiritual powers, recognized sexuality as an impediment to the attainment of spiritual power.<sup>8</sup> But Singer's vision opposes such an extreme denial of human reality which this simple but powerful passage seems to indicate:



[Jacob] awoke trembling, opened his eyes, and discovered Wanda lying next to him on the straw. The air in the barn was cool but he felt the burning heat of her body. She caught hold of him, pressed herself against him, and touched his cheek with her lips. Though he was conscious, he submitted in silence, amazed not only at what was happening but at the fierceness of his own desire. When he sought to push her from him, she clung to him with uncanny strength. He attempted to speak to her, but she stopped his lips with her mouth. He remembered the story of Ruth and Boaz and knew that his lust was more powerful than he. "I am forfeiting the world to come," he said to himself. He heard Wanda's hoarse voice imploring him; she was panting like an animal.

He lay numb, unable now to deny either her or himself, as if he had lost his freedom of will. Suddenly a passage from the Gemara entered his mind: should a man be overcome by the Evil One, let him dress himself in dark clothing, and cover himself in black, and indulge his heart's desire. This precept appeared to have been lurking in his memory for the specific purpose of breaking down his last defense. His legs became heavy and taut, and he was dragged down by a weight he could not understand. "Wanda," he said, and his voice was trembling, "you must first go and bathe in the stream."

"I have already washed and I have combed my hair."

"No, you must immerse yourself in the water."

"Now?"

"God's law requires it."

She lay there in silence, perplexed by this strange demand, and then finally said, "I will do this also."

She rose, and still holding tight to him, opened the barn door. The rain had stopped but the night was mired in darkness and wet. There was not a trace of the sky and the only evidence of the stream was the sound of water churning and bubbling as it rushed downward. Wanda clutched Jacob's hand as they groped blindly and with the abandon of those who no longer fear for their bodies. They stumbled over stones and shrubs, were splashed by the moisture dripping from trees. They were seeking the one spot in that shallow, rock-cluttered torrent where the stream was deep enough for a man to immerse himself. When they reached it, she refused to enter the water without him, and he, forgetting to slip out of his linen trousers, followed her in. The shock of the cold water touching him took away his breath; he almost lost his footing, so swollen was the stream because of the rains. They clung to each other as if undergoing martyrdom. Thus, at a time of the massacres, Jews had plunged into the fire and water. At last, his feet on a firm bottom, Jacob said to Wanda, "Immerse yourself."



She let go his hand and submerged in the water. He reached about, unable to find her. She reappeared, and his eyes, now accustomed to the darkness, made out the dim contours of her face.

"Hurry," he said.

"I have done this for you."

He took her hand and together they ran back to the barn. The cold, he realized, had not extinguished the fire in his veins. Both of them burned with the heat of newly lit kindling. He dried Wanda's naked body with his sheet, breathing heavily, his teeth chattering. Wanda's eyes shone through the darkness. He heard her say to him again, "I have done this for you."

"No, not for me," he answered, "for God," and the blasphemy of his words frightened him.

Nothing could restrain him now. He lifted her in his arms and carried her to the straw. (58-60).

Though Jacob does not escape the conflict of guilt, he does not neglect to observe the sanctifying rite before submitting to his passion. In the final outcome this assertion of his shadow achieves a positive function. Symbolically Singer's vision seems to posit the collective role of the Jew as one of servitude among the gentiles leading to a revitalization of life as conveyed by this powerful picture of ritualized procreation. Jacob's passion for Wanda, who symbolizes the gentiles, seems ordained and never leaves him even after her premature death in childbirth. It is a passion that no woman of his own race and faith could arouse. And even though Jacob never hints at this collective role of the servitude of Jew among gentile, he finds gratification in the fact that he has redeemed one soul from idolatry by converting Wanda to his faith. His guilt is eased in finding a doctrine in the cabala that all





lust was of divine origin: "Coupling was the universal act underlying everything: Torah, prayer, the commandments, God's holy names themselves were mysterious unions of the male and female principles" (111). Jung's theory of anima and animus in the individual psychological composition seems congruous with this mystical doctrine.

Thus Jacob is far removed from the passivity of Gimpel. In servitude to the gentile as in servitude to his passions, Jacob is compelled to act despite the pall of uncertainty, mystery, conflict, suffering, and death which he encounters universally as he shuttles back and forth ambivalently from Jew to gentile. He finally returns to the gentiles in voluntary servitude and eventually dies of complete physical exhaustion. The urge for martyrdom he always rejects because he recognizes that in the final analysis, the inevitable end to life, natural or otherwise, is always a sacrifice. His willing servitude and his rejection of martyrdom imply an inexplicably powerful affirmation of life, even though he was little concerned with the enigma of death; the real enigma for him was the suffering in this earthly existence, somehow involving an invisible conflict between God and Satan, a conflict betwixt which man was inextricably torn. Redemption of man, Jacob's sole urge, was not to destroy the evil but to unmask it so that suffering





could be assuaged and man could be removed from the direct impact of Satan's power and into the grace of God fully attainable at the end of this life.

While Gimpel moves from extroverted preoccupations to an introverted attitude characterized by a feeling function of a passive religious nature, Jacob is more introverted with manifestations of all functions -- sensation, thinking, feeling, and intuition. For Jacob the inanimate objects of nature spring to life with faces and spirits, characteristic of introverted sensation; his absorption in the puzzle of human destiny, mistaken by his fellow Jews as a kind of vacuity, is a manifestation of the thinking introvert;<sup>9</sup> his introverted feeling does not yield to the often extreme desire for martyrdom but reveals itself in a will-to-redeem, seeking collective redemption in another form of self-sacrifice which is servitude and which he intuitively perceives as his role in human life.



## CHAPTER II

### FLANNERY O'CONNOR: THE UNCONSCIOUS MIND A SOURCE OF THE DIVINE

Flannery O'Connor's art, like Singer's, concerns itself with trying to make transparent the reality of redemptive grace, reality of theistic mystery which can be presented but not explained. To achieve this complex purpose she says,

writers who see by the light of their Christian faith will have, in these times, the sharpest eyes for the grotesque, for the perverse, for the unacceptable . . . . Redemption is meaningless unless there is a cause for it in the actual life we live, and for the last few centuries there has been operating in our culture the secular belief that there is no such cause.<sup>1</sup>

In choosing between the reality of good and evil or nothing, the adherents to the secular belief she mentions, the rational humanists, choose nothing; that is, they choose an attitude of spiritual scepticism or nihilism which for O'Connor, as for Singer, constitutes the greatest demonic reality. The grotesque and perverse in our world are a reality; in a world where basic spiritual and social values have been derogated, the grotesque values may be the truer.<sup>2</sup> Psychologically the irrationality of her grotesque saints is not linked to the purely physical but, on the contrary, to the divine. With such a link, the problem of determining good or evil becomes hopelessly



complex.<sup>3</sup> It is understandable why those who have not read her fiction closely might mistakenly accuse her of diabolism,<sup>4</sup> but if she is saying, as I believe she is, that the divine often shines forth from beneath the diabolical, her vision is defiantly spiritual.

Spiney<sup>5</sup> points out that the prophecy central to the work of the greatest religious story-tellers of the century has been: through the character of the motiveless criminal shall come a new man free of the Devil! He indicates that O'Connor belongs to this kind of story-teller. The transformation of the shadow or trickster figure into divine likeness as observed by Jung, also conforms to this pattern of thought.

O'Connor's stories have their settings in the southern American states where she lived among people whose religion is predominantly Protestant fundamentalism. She observed and knew these people thoroughly. Susceptible as many of them are to religious fanaticism, it would be another misunderstanding of her purpose to attribute to her any fascination with the morbid aspects of such fanaticism. These people displayed vital concern for points of Christian doctrine in which she herself, unlike most Catholics, was also greatly concerned.<sup>6</sup> But it is the psychological nature of their concern and not their doctrinal views that inspired her spiritual vision.

In her first novel Wise Blood written in 1952, Hazel



Motes, the twenty-two-year old protagonist of a religious fundamentalist background has never read any other book but the Bible; when he does so, he wears his mother's silver-rimmed spectacles, indicating a defective vision, not only physical but also spiritual, a defect also indicated by his name. After serving in the army overseas for four years, he returns home convinced he does not have, nor ever has had, a soul. His army friends have told him so; and although he takes a long time believing them, he wants to believe them and get rid of the soul idea forever. In the army he finds opportunity "to get rid of it without corruption, to be converted to nothing instead of to evil." Returning home by train, he still has the glasses and the black Bible which he no longer reads but keeps because it is from home; the glasses will become useful should his vision ever become dim. But even before he joins the army and realizes he is destined to become a preacher, he senses a conscious antipathy toward Jesus with "a deep black wordless conviction in him that the way to avoid Jesus was to avoid sin." Yet by the implication of the following passage, the image of Jesus occupies his unconscious mind:

Later he saw Jesus move from tree to tree in the back of his mind, a wild ragged figure motioning him to turn around and come off into the dark where he was not sure of his footing, where he might be walking on the water and not know it, and then suddenly know it and drown . . . . (16)

While in a half sleep in his berth on the journey home from the army, the bizarre image of his mother as she had died







and had been laid in her coffin bears down upon him "like a huge bat" and awakens him with a frenzied outcry:

"I'm sick!" he called. "I can't be closed up in this thing. Get me out!"

The porter stood watching him and didn't move.

"Jesus," Haze said, "Jesus." (19)

The image evokes the unconscious utterance of Jesus with whom he associates his mother and of whom he wants to divest himself. The unconscious utterance of Jesus keeps falling from him at unexpected occasions as he pursues with every conscious energy the preaching of his "Church Without Christ." In his outlandish dark suit and black "Jesus-seeing hat" he resembles the gospel preacher. His gospel, however, is atheism, the dark shadow of nihilism cast by some false obstacle in his deluded vision. Thus the eye provides the basic pattern of imagery in the novel, ironically implying the inadequacy of this organ upon which egostic rationalism largely depends when reducing spiritual truth to nothing. Haze says,

"I'm going preach there was no fall because there was nothing to fall from and no Redemption because there was no fall and no Judgement because there wasn't the first two. Nothing matters but that Jesus was a liar." (60)

Haze does not believe in sin and to prove it he practices what is called sin, yet insisting that he is clean. Blaspheming Jesus, he thinks, is no sin either, but he suddenly realizes that such blasphemy indirectly affirms a belief in His existence.



Trying to avoid any display of conscience, he tries to gratify his lust by living with a whore; and when he meets Sabbath Lily, the presumably innocent fifteen-year-old daughter of the blind evangelist Hawks, he plans to seduce her. But the conflict of his unconscious mind which is unable to dispense with Jesus intercedes to delay the seduction. He is intrigued by Hawks' blindness, reportedly self-inflicted as proof of his total commitment to his faith in Christ, and for which Hawks has a newspaper clipping as evidence. It does not matter that both Sabbath and Hawks are shams, for Haze does not lose fascination with the idea of self-blinding as proof of total commitment to belief. His preaching arouses only a couple of undesirable followers for his Church Without Christ, and the mummy that one of these followers steals from the museum as a replacement for Jesus in his church of atheism repulses Haze, a repulsion that indicates unconscious affirmation of his belief in a living Jesus.

Consciously, Haze rationalizes his own act of self-blinding as total commitment to his atheism, but in his blindness he confesses that he is not clean. "If there's no bottom in your eyes, they hold more," he says to his landlady who tells him sarcastically, "You must believe in Jesus or you wouldn't do these foolish things." Haze, failing to deny the truth of this observation, wanders compulsively out into the night of driving, icy rain and fails to return. Next day his



mercenary landlady sends the police after him with the false excuse that he has not paid his rent. They find him at the point of death but he does not want to return. In a harshly ironic image of despiritualized, materialistic society, the police tell him he has to go back to pay his rent, clubbing him over the head. He dies in the squad car and his body is brought back to his landlady. Her final impression of the gruesome corpse "moving farther into the darkness until he was a pin point of light" implies that Haze has made his atonement for violating the Jesus he has always believed in.

Haze's psychological conflict between his conscious ego and his unconscious mind is externalized by personification in the characters around him.<sup>7</sup> Enoch Emery is a reflection of Haze's superficial self submerged in the evil of being converted to nothing; Emery knows all about Jesus but wants no part of him. Sabbath reflects his perverted lust and Hawks symbolizes his hypocritical tendencies. Solace Layfield is his unconscious belief in Jesus or perhaps his conscience which he kills with his rationalistic impulse symbolized in the Essex, a false essence or truth.

But Haze can also be recognized as a saint comparable to St. Anthony in his temptation.<sup>8</sup> God may even take away faith as being too joyfully gratifying, and so the saint dispenses with faith as a test, which, to be decisive, must so thoroughly





destroy in him the desire and capability for sinning that evil can no longer avail against him in anything. That was the victory of St. Anthony, a degree of sanctity that Hazel Motes seems to attain before he dies. Such a religious trial, though wholly concerned with redemption, might be viewed as egoistical in that it aims only at self-redemption. The archetype of the self, in Jungian context, indicates a harmonious psychological adjustment of conscious and unconscious mind which is not egoistical, but which divests the persona of its false wrappings and which at the same time is free of the suggestive powers of primordial images.<sup>9</sup> Motes divests himself violently of defective sight in order to restore his spiritual vision. The minuscule but inextinguishable divine light in his unconscious mind guides him from a debauched scepticism. He is closer to the archetype of a martyr than the archetype of an active redeemer as Jacob is in The Slave, and yet Motes indirectly qualifies as a redeemer of men by his ultimate function of negating spiritual negation.

Tarwater, the juvenile saint in The Violent Bear It Away written eight years after Wise Blood, takes on a more positive redemptive function in his story. His great-uncle, who has raised him, charges him with a three-fold mission: he is to be responsible for the old man's carefully self-planned burial in a proper grave marked with a white cross; he is to





baptize Tarwater's five-year-old idiot cousin, son of his uncle Rayber, thereby not only redeeming the child but also "burning clean" the eyes of rationalist Rayber; and finally, he is to become a prophet for religious truth. The great-uncle, a rabid New Testament fundamentalist and "the only prophet who had ever made liquor for a living," has carefully groomed Tarwater for his mission:

The old man, who said he was a prophet, had raised the boy to expect the Lord's call himself and to be prepared for the day he would hear it. He had schooled him in the evils that befall prophets; in those that came from the world, which are trifling, and those that come from the Lord and burn the prophet clean; for he himself had been burned clean and burned clean again. He had learned by fire. (306)

The great-uncle has also preserved young Tarwater against the defilement of school, which to the boy was a sure sign of prophetic election; yet he anticipates a further miraculous sign that would exalt him to the company of such men of God as Noah, Job, Abraham and Moses. But with all his outward illiterate crudity, outlandish appearance, and brooding anti-social sentiments, Tarwater is endowed with an ambivalent intelligence that conflicts with the irrational impulses of "Jesus misery." His conflict of conscious ego and unconscious compulsion acquires impetus with the death of his great-uncle. A voice, symbolically the Devil scoffing at the folly of the old man's ideas, whispers to him as he starts digging the grave. Abetted by the voice he drinks himself into a stupor when his



digging is interrupted by the appearance of two colored neighbors who have come to replenish their jugs with the old man's liquor. One of the neighbors finds him intoxicated on the bank in which the whiskey was kept concealed and views him in a strangely grotesque posture not without its aspect of mysterious divinity. The italics are mine:

/ The neighbor / waited a minute, bent, looking down at the limp figure sprawled against the bank. The boy's head was tilted backwards over a root that jutted out of the clay wall. His mouth hung open and his turned-up hat cut a straight line across his forehead, just over his half-open unseeing eyes. His cheekbones protruded, narrow and thin like the arms of a cross and the hollows under them had an ancient look as if the child's skeleton beneath were as old as the world . . . (331)

Tarwater neglects his burial mission when he decides to set fire to the place. It was an attempted cremation, a nihilistic act that the great-uncle had deliberately sought to escape. He had sensed that his atheistic nephew, Rayber, would give him such a meaningless interment, and thus he had specifically charged Tarwater with a Christian burial. But Tarwater accedes to the voice of rationalism concluding that "you don't owe the dead anything." However, the intended cremation fails, for unknown to Tarwater the old man's body was properly buried by the colored neighbors while Tarwater was drinking at the still. This seemingly providential intervention ultimately plays an apocalyptic part in Tarwater's redemption. Fire and water, as the name Tarwater indicates, form the major controlling imagery in the story. They are the potent purifiers



serving the divine mystery. Bread and fish, the products of fire and water, symbolically satisfy man's spiritual hunger, an insatiable one which the intake of physical food cannot satisfy. This is the intensifying hunger that grips Tarwater, although he sets out to deliberately violate the irrational commissions with which his great-uncle had charged him.

The evil surrounding Tarwater intensifies after the cremation attempt. Again contrary to the old man's directions, Tarwater goes to live with his uncle Rayber whose secular humanism is represented as evil. This move, however, brings Tarwater into contact with the idiot child, Bishop, the object of his other mission. The assignment is as repulsive to Tarwater as the sight of the ugly child, a grotesque replica of the old man "grown backwards." But although the child represents a deformed fragment of schoolteacher Rayber's fragmented self, it is the fragment that holds the divine attraction which Tarwater cannot face. Upon Rayber, too, the child has a strange effect for he views the idiot

as an x signifying the general hideousness of fate. He did not believe that he himself was formed in the image and likeness of God but that Bishop was he had no doubt. The little boy was part of a simple equation that required no further solution, except at the moments when with little or no warning he would feel himself overwhelmed by the horrifying love . . . . (372)

Tarwater's attraction to the missionary gospel meeting, his rejection of Rayber, his accidental baptism of Bishop while drowning him, and his eventual return to Powderhead are all







manifestations of his unconscious spiritual integrity asserting itself in action despite the intensifying evil that surrounds him. The evil culminates in the homosexual attack upon Tarwater when he lets himself be picked up by a stranger. But Tarwater finds his way back to his great-uncle's grave:

he threw himself to the ground and with his face against the dirt of the grave, he heard the command GO WARN THE CHILDREN OF GOD OF THE TERRIBLE SPEED OF MERCY. The words were as silent as seeds opening one at a time in his blood. (447)

The threefold mission assigned by his great-uncle was now fulfilled. Psychologically we can see the great-uncle as a personification of the unconscious mind, the idiot as the divinity in the unconscious mind, and Rayber as the conscious ego.<sup>10</sup> They are all a part of Tarwater as they are a part of every human mind, for all of us are heirs to original sin. For O'Connor, redemption is complete salvation from the evils that afflict us and such redemption can only occur in death. Her grotesque saints, Motes and Tarwater, must die young to be redeemed young.<sup>11</sup> Thus we may be inclined to believe that O'Connor was a disciple of despair in her view of this life; her saints, like Gimpel, find no affirmation or worldly joy as Jacob found. But perhaps in our part of the world where spiritual truth is declining through rejection and negation, she found little to affirm. Her saints, therefore, function as redeemers by being negators of negation, revealing her deeper optimism, not seen on the surface, that no matter how



deeply a man may fall into inevitable sin, he is still in God's keeping. It is only with this kind of spiritual integrity that affirmation and joy in life can really be felt. Such spiritual integrity for O'Connor and Singer, as for Jung, does not have a rational source, but an intuitive one, which our conscious egos tend to derogate to the ridiculous point of nothingness.

While both Motes and Tarwater function as redeemers in the sense that they are negators of nothingness, Tarwater is more comprehensive because he does not become passive in his self-sacrifice as Motes does. Both try to restrain the unconscious, divine power with forced extroversion, a consciousness dominated by the thinking function. Yet Tarwater does not identify with the personified rationality represented by Rayber, a figure that Tarwater despises. He keeps taunting the Prufrockish Rayber with "I can act, but you can't" and eventually, proves it by drowning Bishop, an act that Rayber attempted but could not fulfill. Before his great-uncle dies, Tarwater is not averse to the notion of becoming a prophet. The urge is lost, however, in the evils of conscious rationalization, but in fiery sacrificial death Tarwater suddenly attains complete realization of the former urge as a prophetic emissary of God's mercy for the redeemed dead who are O'Connor's "Children of God." Amid the overwhelming



darkness of evil, he is redeemed by the apocalyptic flash of light seemingly conveyed through introverted intuition, and he makes his exit possessed of prophetic truth which has the power to redeem.

Tarwater whirled toward the treeline. There rising and spreading in the night, a red-gold tree of fire ascended as if it would consume the darkness in one tremendous burst of flame. The boy's breath went out to meet it. He knew that this was the fire that had encircled Daniel, that had raised Elijah from the earth, that had spoken to Moses and would in that instant speak to him . . . . (447)

For O'Connor the mysterious redeeming power is a mere pin point of light that erupts in an apocalyptic flash in the unconscious mind. The pin point of light is never extinguished by the intensity of evil, so O'Connor's archetype of grotesque saint is not concerned with an active attack upon evil as Singer's Jacob is. In the lives of Motes and Tarwater, resistance to the shadow of evil does not seem necessary for the assertion of divine grace. Like death, the shadow functions as a cause for redemption. Trying to eliminate this essential cause through human rationalization destroys all purpose and meaning in human existence with the paradoxical result that the power of evil is reinforced rather than weakened.

At the point of death, divine grace is revealed to Motes and Tarwater, having the implication of redemption in after life; but the next pair of archetypes I turn to seek to achieve meaning and purpose in earthly life without the emphasis on redemption in after life.





### CHAPTER III

#### DOSTOEVSKY: THE QUEST FOR INDIVIDUATION

O'Connor hardly concerns herself with human relations in any of its normal and positive potentials but rather with the grotesque aspects of human nature despite which the most depraved individual may not escape divine grace. In contrast Dostoevsky was concerned with the aspects of human nature that are based upon a reality of human worth.<sup>1</sup> Like Singer and O'Connor, he is profoundly concerned with the dualistic nature of man, not as a mere reflection of the transcendental conflict of good and evil but as a psychological state pertinent to environmental factors, and how this conflicting state can be diminished if not completely reconciled. For Dostoevsky such diminution involves the necessity for religious belief which has a quality remarkably in accord with Jung's concept of self-realization or individuation in which the self, although imbued with religious faith, becomes free of the suggestive power of primordial images, or, in other words, free of primitive superstitions.

A love-hate dualism is the aspect of human nature that seems to concern Dostoevsky most. Hate can be diminished by increasing love whose vaster potential in human nature is attained through human suffering. The suffering of innocent





children, of mankind in general, and above all, the suffering of Christ can enlarge the human capacity to love.

The person from whom such love overflowed was Christ. In his human image He divested Himself of any pretentious masks attributable to the conscious ego, a divestiture essentially characteristic of Jungian individuation and remarkably characteristic of Prince Myshkin in The Idiot and of Alyosha in The Brothers Karamazov. Carr, who refers to the tradition of the Pure Fool (the simple man whose folly confounds the wisdom of great men, and who survives in Russian literature from early folklore), thinks that Myshkin "with his holiness and his ignorance, with his epilepsy and his periods of recognized insanity, may not unjustly be counted the greatest incarnation in Russian literature . . . of the Pure Fool."<sup>2</sup> Carr also recognizes the secondary influence of Cervantes' Don Quixote on Dostoevsky, who greatly admired this fictitious character different from Myshkin only in the expression of his tragedy in laughter whereas Myshkin's is expressed in pathos.

Dostoevsky personifies love and hate in the two separate personalities of Myshkin, the man of pure compassion, and of Rogozhin, the man of pure passion, subsuming jealousy, acquisitiveness, hate, and violence. Nastasya is the wronged child, the victim of human injustice, whom the compassion of



Myshkin attempts to redeem but whom the passion of Rogozhin destroys. The personification of compassion in Myshkin strongly implies Dostoevsky's belief in the dominating function of feeling in the human attitude. Evil actions, when they result in suffering which in turn arouse the feelings of love and compassion inherent in man, are not in themselves to be condemned. Thus Dostoevsky, who often transforms his prostitutes and criminals into saints, ascribes the belief to Myshkin that "compassion was the chief and perhaps only law of all human existence." The Christ-like Myshkin, whose apocalyptic suffering is represented in his epileptic affliction, assumes the burden of a self-appointed mission. After mitigation of his illness he descends from a heaven-like retreat in Switzerland to his native Russia believing that the influence of his compassionate though passive presence as a friend among "republicans and sinners" can redeem them from their destructive passions.

Despite this awesome vision he displays the innocence and naivetè of a child and is as drawn to children as they are to him. He deplores how "little grown-up people understand children" particularly parents, for he feels "the soul is healed by being with children." Adults oppress him and he indicates that he is "morbidly sensitive" and "out of place in society." Although he knows nothing about women, his ultimate relation with



Aglaia in prospective marriage indicates his capability of sexual love. But this love is not as assertive as his compassion for Nastasya who eventually rejects him for the pity that motivates his marriage to her. The proud Aglaia, who at first regards him as an absurd creature, grows to love him because she understands that "anyone who chose could deceive him, and that he would forgive anyone afterward who had deceived him." But Nastasya's face which he first sees in a portrait overwhelms him with pity like the almost unbearable sight of Christ's face as He descends from the cross in the painting hanging in the sepulchral gloom of Rogozhin's house. Even in the baleful Rogozhin, Myshkin perceives "a great heart which could suffer and be compassionate." But despite their exchange of crosses in symbolic brotherhood, Myshkin becomes uneasy with guilt over his own distrustful thoughts, intuitively prompting him to think evil of Rogozhin, an evil ultimately vindicated when Rogozhin kills the long-suffering Nastasya.

Myshkin also perceives the evil in the Russian tendency toward atheism:

["Atheism is"] the outcome not only of vanity, not only of a bad vain feeling, but also of spiritual agony, spiritual thirst, a craving for something higher, for a firm footing, for a fatherland in which they have ceased to believe, because they have never known it! It's easier for a Russian to become an atheist than for anyone else in the world . . . . (560)

In this outburst at a distinguished social gathering in the Epanchin household, Myshkin displays a quasi-intellectual insight.





Thus, in the final analysis, Myshkin does not function on feeling alone; he has intellectual concerns and intuitive perceptions. He also has the mystical experience of the eternal moment in that minute just before the epileptic fit, when suddenly, in the midst of sadness, spiritual darkness and oppression, there seemed at moments a flash of light in his brain, and with extraordinary impetus all his vital forces suddenly began working at their highest tension. The sense of life, the consciousness of self, were multiplied ten times at these moments which passed like a flash of lightning. His heart and his mind were flooded with extraordinary light; all his uneasiness, all his doubts, all his anxieties were relieved at once; they were all merged in a lofty calm, full of serene, harmonious joy and hope. (225)

But Myshkin with all his saintliness and affirmation of existence cannot bring his mission to success. His influence does not prevail over the passion of Rogozhin or defend Nastasya from destruction. It seems that Myshkin's failure lies in the passiveness of his compassion which could not withstand the assertion of the shadow personified in Rogozhin. Myshkin is himself overwhelmed as indicated by his regression into literal idiocy at the end of the story. In Jung's concept of attaining the self, the shadow is not dissolved as it seems to be in Myshkin if he is viewed as an entity separate from Rogozhin. The shadow is de-energized in individuation but retains the potential to again become energized.<sup>3</sup> This seems to imply that the self cannot be a passive individual if the shadow is to retain its neutrality.

In Myshkin's failure Dostoevsky does not, however, imply the failure of Christ's mission on earth, for in his last



novel, The Brothers Karamazov, Dostoevsky creates a revitalized Myshkin-like hero in Alyosha whose compassion and understanding go beyond Myshkin's passivity.

Although Alyosha does not suffer in the way Myshkin does, he is not untouched by the Karamazov passion out of which he was born. He displays the Karamazovian weakness for extreme indulgence, which to Dostoevsky was probably as evil as plunging into extremes of sinfulness. Alyosha does not escape temptations, and although he reveals the innate potential for realization of the self in childhood and youth, he nonetheless encounters life's fires which can destroy, or, as in his case, fuse body, mind, and spirit into life-affirming compatibility.

Alyosha's first unforgettable experience occurred at such a tender age -- two years -- that one assumes he had a precociously impressionable mind which can only be explained by the power of unconscious perception. In the chapter, "The Third Son Alyosha," the memorable incident is described:

All he remembered was an evening, a quiet summer evening, an open window, the slanting rays of the setting sun (it was the slanting rays that he remembered most of all), an icon in the corner of the room, a lighted lamp in front of it, and on her knees before the icon his mother, sobbing as though in hysterics, with screams and shrieks, snatching him up in her arms, hugging him to her breast so tightly that it hurt, and praying for him to the Virgin, holding him out in both arms to the icon as though under the Virgin's protection, and suddenly a nurse runs in and snatches him from her in terror. There you have the picture! At that moment Alyosha remembered his mother's face, too: he used to say that as far as he could remember it was frenzied but beautiful. But there were very few people, indeed, with whom he would share this memory. . . . (17)



Thus his mother's frenzied but beautiful face fuses with the icon of the Virgin to whom he was dedicated and becomes indelibly branded upon his mind. It seems that this experience is illustrative of Jung's concept of the anima, the image of woman in a man existing as an archetype of the collective unconscious. Jung points out that man is not wholly man and woman is not wholly woman by the nature of the image of anima and animus respectively. The truth of such a theory appeals in its potential synthesis of sexual polarity. On the other hand, it provides a possible explanation for abnormal manifestations of perverse sexuality in which extreme assertion of the anima or animus can produce homosexuality. Alyosha's anima tends toward harmonization and comes into consciousness through childhood contact with his mother. Jung points out<sup>4</sup> that such a contact is most powerful in moulding and influencing the child. The experience has a marked subjective character, for it is not only significant how the mother behaves, but how he feels she behaves in the positive or negative sense. Dostoevsky further emphasizes the significance of this experience for Alyosha when he is a young man of twenty. In the chapter "Over the Brandy" the father, Fyodor Karamazov, recalls an incident concerning his relationship to the "shrieker," mother of Alyosha and Ivan. He tells Alyosha in the presence of Ivan that only once did he do anything to offend





her and that was when he wanted to "knock that mysticism out of her." He had spit on her miracle-working icon and describes her violent reaction; but before he completes the description, Alyosha reacts identically as his mother did in the original incident. Fyodor is struck by the remarkable resemblance. "He's upset for his mother," he mutters. Ivan reminds him angrily that she was his (Ivan's) mother too. Fyodor for a second fails to associate Ivan with Alyosha's mother, and thereby underscores not only the vast difference in the nature of the two brothers, but also the marked identification of Alyosha with his mystical mother.

Also noteworthy is the designated predominance of women in raising Alyosha after the death of his mother. This femininized background suggests that Alyosha passed through a stage of circumstantial shamanization, a kind of psychological alchemy which in Alyosha's case produces a magical, maternalistic love that transforms others. The fool, too, is a kind of shaman possessing the magic of humor which he uses to transform reality in a negative way by making us accept suffering in a conscious revelation of our weaknesses; the mystic transforms reality in a positive way through insight or intuition based on unconscious perception of invisible truth.<sup>5</sup> Jung also points to the significance of the shaman or trickster figure as a manifestation of the collective unconscious. He says becoming a shaman involved agony of body and soul through which the shaman became an "approximation





to the savior" who as the sufferer takes away suffering and becomes the agent of healing.<sup>6</sup>

In the memory of his mother's suffering and in his disintegrated family background, Alyosha, too, suffers intensely. Dostoevsky says early in the novel that Alyosha was not a mystic, but Gasset points out that one must not be entirely convinced of Dostoevsky's introductory biographies of his characters who, later in their talk and actions, often throw us off the author's definition.<sup>7</sup> The sincerity and introversion that marked Alyosha's childhood and youth did not stand in the way of his arousing a spontaneous love in people. His "absurd and morbid modesty and chastity" enticed fellow school mates to taunt him with obscenities and to "pull his legs." He was not stupid but neither was he one of the top pupils of his class. Here is an impression which can be pertinently quoted:

Alyosha was one of those young men who in a way resembled saintly fools and who, if they suddenly came into possession of a large sum of money, would not hesitate to give it away at the first demand either to some charity or perhaps simply to the first clever swindler who happened to ask for it. And, generally speaking, he did not seem to know the value of money, though not, of course in a literal sense. When he was given pocket money, which he never asked for himself, he either kept it for weeks not knowing what to do with it, or was so very careless with it that it was gone in no time. (20)

But Alyosha is not a man of inviolable purity and innocence. Rakitin ironically reminds him of this when referring to Dmitri's and Grushenka's relationship of which Alyosha admits knowledge



and understanding:

So [passion is] a familiar subject to you is it? You've thought about it already, of sensuality, I mean. Oh, you virgin! You are a quiet chap, Alyosha, you're a saint. I agree. But quiet as you are, one can't tell what you haven't thought about, or what you don't know already, can one? A virgin and already plumbed such depths! I've been watching you for a long time. You're a Karamazov yourself, a full-blown Karamazov -- breed and natural selection do mean something then. A sensualist after your father and a saintly fool after your mother. Why do you tremble? It's true what I'm saying, isn't it? . . . (90)

Thus the shadow, the Karamazov passion, haunts Alyosha too. But the shadow is not to be regarded as totally negative, and like Jung, Dostoevsky probably saw it as having some positive function since there can be no shadow without light. The shadow is the source of suffering and guilt and thus the way to redemption. Alyosha has to overcome the temptations of the shadow before he can become the chief hero in Dostoevsky's vision of life.

For Dostoevsky, as for Jung, the shadow is not passion entirely, but it is also the pride of intellect, the excessive ego consciousness as revealed in Ivan and to a more evil extreme in Smerdyakov and Rakitin. Men who pride themselves in the authority of the intellect are doomed to suffering and tragedy. In Singer's and O'Connor's work as in Dostoevsky's, the shadow is also regarded as spiritual doubt, negation, and lack of faith to the extent that crime becomes a necessary condition for the unbeliever.<sup>8</sup> Ivan who sought absolute authority in the mind, and Dmitri, who sought it in the body, only compounded their



suffering. Alyosha is beset by all three temptations: intellectual pride, spiritual doubt, and sensual indulgence,<sup>9</sup> not unlike the temptations of authority, miracle, and mystery which the Grand Inquisitor charged Christ with foolishly rejecting when tempted by Satan. All these temptations are theoretically irresistible to the assertive ego which loses touch with the innate spirit of collectiveness in human relationships.

But had Alyosha remained in the monastery as he originally intended, he would not have had these essential encounters with the shadow and perhaps not have attained the self. Therefore, his change of heart concerning monkhood is noteworthy. His decision to enter the monastery was suddenly made, we are told, after he returned to his father's household and found his mother's grave. Alyosha's calm but touching graveside visit had a salutary effect on his dissipated father who immediately made a large donation to the monastery and assented to his son's entrance into monkhood. Alyosha's attitude to his father was one of uncondemning silence, the same unchanging attitude which wins the affection of his brothers and all the people with whom he comes into contact. But he is subjected to Rakitin's taunting intellectual nihilism, and Lise's ridicule of his cassock which she says does not suit him. Lise stirs up self-diffidence in him, but he is in no great danger from Rakitin whose misunderstanding of Ivan and Dmitri becomes apparent to





Alyosha. He tells Rakitin that the latter is jealous of Ivan, but at no time does he insult Rakitin. According to Fyodor Karamazov, Smerdyakov is the one character who despises Alyosha, but strangely there is no confrontation of these two brothers, implying the vast gulf between spiritualized man and the totally depraved man. Alyosha fears Katerina in whom he perceives a false motive of egoistic magnanimity in her relationship with Dmitri, and at one point she angrily calls Alyosha a "little religious half-wit." From Rakitin he hears that Grushenka wants to seduce him, but Alyosha firmly believes that no one could or would ever want to hurt him. He senses guilt when Lise kisses his hand; but in response to her needling that he is "cold," he kisses her fully on the mouth but not without a deeper sense of guilt. He asks, "Who would marry me except you?" and then again reminds himself that he, too, is a Karamazov. He lies to her about the letter and in her presence voices doubt in his belief in God. Yet Dmitri views him as "an angel on earth," although Dmitri's triangle with Katerina and Grushenka is far too intricate for the angelic monk to resolve; Dmitri, like Ivan, must solve his problem in suffering.

Alyosha, however, loves all people -- not just the sufferers. He virtually worships Father Zossima who urges Alyosha to help his family with their problems. Zossima tells



him that monks are worse than other men and that is why they come to the monastery. It is the sin of pride to wish solely for the salvation of one's own soul, for a man must share responsibility for the guilt of all other men; therefore, he advises Alyosha to go out into the world where Alyosha, like Myshkin, displays a natural affection for children. This affection shows in his encounter with the school boys; he accepts with uncondemning silence the insults, stone-throwing, and the biting of his finger to the bone by the abused Ilyusha, whose humiliation and provocation Alyosha comes to understand and tries to atone. It is in this meeting with the children that Alyosha conceives his role as a teacher wherein he can assert his compassion for mankind collectively.

But before Alyosha perceives his active role as a redeemer he passes through disturbing conflicts. It is Ivan who first seriously tempts Alyosha to believe in the complete authority of the conscious mind. Ivan's "Euclidean mind" logically establishes that if there is no immortality of the soul, there is no virtue, which means everything is permitted. Alyosha does not accept this, but even though he reaffirms his belief in God and immortality, he indicates some vacillation. He admits not being always able to see things clearly, and when Ivan reasons about the suffering of innocent children, Ivan momentarily catches Alyosha in un-Christian vindictiveness. But



Alyosha is not a rebel and even Ivan denies that he is one, because he, too, has a desire to go on living life the way it is. At this point, Alyosha believes that faith in the all-forgiving Christ is the edifice upon which humanity is built and that acceptance of forgiveness is an act of affirmation of life. Ivan then concentrates his assault on Christ with his poem of the Grand Inquisitor. His powerful argument reveals that Christ rejected miracle, mystery, and authority in the interest of human freedom, a freedom that is the very root of man's suffering. The only answer to this Euclidean logic is the kiss of forgiveness that Christ places on the lips of the Inquisitor and that Alyosha symbolically gives Ivan at the end of his devastating poem. Although Alyosha notes that the poem is in praise of Jesus since it exonerates Him from any deception of man, as opposed to the deception of the Inquisitor, Alyosha, it seems, does not escape the intellectual force of Ivan's reasoning entirely unshaken. But Ivan's sagging shoulder as he walks away symbolizes the burden he must bear; for he has shown how far removed he is from Christ who loved individuals. Ivan cannot understand how one can love one's neighbors; "To love a man," he says "it's necessary that he should be hidden, for as soon as he shows his face, love is gone." But Alyosha reminds him that there is much love in mankind, Christ-like love, which Alyosha feels in himself and which Ivan's Euclideanism cannot





destroy. Ivan is to learn painfully that exclusive reliance on intellect leads to bloodshed and the justification of any kind of violence.

The Karamazov shadow of intellect symbolized in Ivan does not, however, threaten Alyosha's spiritual convictions as intensely as the crisis Alyosha experiences in the death of Father Zossima and his body's unnaturally rapid decomposition into the odor of corruption. Alyosha was not looking for miracles, but he was looking for justice for his spiritual hero. That dishonor and disgrace should be heaped upon this man, while not rousing Alyosha to arms against God, does move Alyosha toward an attitude reminiscent of Jacob the slave: a temporary rejection of God's world in which providence submits to the blind dumb laws of nature. Rakitin pounces upon Alyosha in his lapse and has little difficulty in persuading him to eat sausage and drink vodka at the time of Lent. He also agrees to be taken to Grushenka, who has offered Rakitin, unknown to Alyosha, twenty-five roubles if he can lure the young monk into her seductive presence. Thus, in the wake of his spiritual crisis he becomes exposed to a third temptation, that of sensual gratification. But the strong, positive nature of Alyosha's anima asserts itself against the shadow of illicit sexual indulgence. Grushenka's person restores Alyosha to his soul just as he restores Grushenka to hers. She proclaims her





sisterly love for Alyosha whose face will henceforth be reflected permanently in her heart; he has inspired in her the Madonna love through his compassion and understanding. This was the first time a man had come to see her without insisting on gratifying his low desires; and she is strengthened in her moral decision to re-unite with her officer husband who first seduced her. Rakitin is revealed for the Judas that he is, but he has unwittingly fostered Alyosha's spiritual resurrection. Grushenka has given him the "onion" of compassion. He exclaims:

"Did you see how she took pity on me? I came here thinking to find a wicked soul -- I felt drawn to wickedness because I was mean and wicked myself, but I've found a true sister. I've found a treasure -- a living soul. She took pity on me just now . . . I'm talking about you Grushenka. You've just restored my soul." (413)

Alyosha returns to the monastery uplifted and no longer concerned with the odor of corruption. His soul "was full of something that was complete, firm, and satisfying." While listening to Father Paissy's Bible reading, he falls asleep and dreams of a re-union with Father Zossima wherein they drink "the wine of gladness" Christ provided in his first miracle at Cana of Galilee. Father Zossima turns to him in this dream and says:

"And you my quiet one, and you, my gentle boy, you, too have known how to give an onion today to a woman craving salvation. Begin your work, my dear one, begin your work my gentle one!" . . ." (425)

Alyosha awakens from his dream and goes out of the cell enraptured.



He did not stop on the steps, but went down rapidly. His soul, overflowing with rapture, was craving for freedom and unlimited space. The vault of heaven, studded with softly shining stars, stretched wide and vast over him. From the zenith to the horizon the Milky Way stretched its two arms dimly across the sky. The fresh, motionless, still night enfolded the earth. The white towers and golden domes of the cathedral gleamed against the sapphire sky. The gorgeous flowers in the beds near the house went to sleep till morning. The silence of the earth came in contact with the mystery of the stars . . . Alyosha stood, gazed, and suddenly he threw himself down flat upon the earth.

He did not know why he was embracing it. He could not have explained to himself why he longed so irresistibly to kiss it, to kiss it all, but he kissed it weeping, sobbing and drenching it with his tears, and vowed frenziedly to love it, to love it for ever and ever. "Water the earth with the tears of your gladness and love those tears," it rang in his soul. What was he weeping over? Oh, he was weeping in his rapture even over those stars which were shining for him from the abyss of space and "he was not ashamed of that ecstasy." It was as though the threads from all those innumerable worlds of God met all at once in his soul, and it was trembling all over "as it came in contact with other worlds." He wanted to forgive every one and for everything, and to beg forgiveness -- oh! not for himself, but for all men, for all and for everything, "and others are begging for me," it echoed in his soul again. But with every moment he felt clearly and almost palpably that something firm and immovable, like the firmament itself, was entering his soul. A sort of idea was gaining an ascendancy over his mind -- and that for the rest of his life, for ever and ever. He had fallen upon the earth a weak youth, but he rose from it a resolute fighter for the rest of his life, and he realized and felt it suddenly, at the very moment of his rapture. And never, never for the rest of his life could Alyosha forget that moment. "Someone visited my soul at that hour!" he used to say afterwards with firm faith in his words . . .

Three days later he left the monastery in accordance with the words of his late elder, who had bidden him "sojourn in the world." (426-427)

This mystical experience or spiritual resurrection of Alyosha, an apocalypse like Myshkin's timeless moment remarkably illustrating Jung's concept of introverted sensation, resembles



somewhat the experience of a cured neurotic. As soon as the patient recognizes "some hitherto unconscious but essential psychic content whose realization gives a new impetus to one's life and activity," treatment comes to successful termination.<sup>10</sup> The essence of Alyosha's eternal moment, like Myshkin's, is fusion -- fusion of the universe with his inner being, the unconscious with the conscious, and the consequence is a new self, vibrant and life-affirming. Alyosha's experience goes beyond all religious creeds, including the Christian. He is one with the earth, the symbol of fertility and sensuality; with irrepressible ecstasy he can kiss and embrace Mother Earth in whose womb he is spiritually conceived and reborn, committed to love all life and the lifeless. Subject and object have merged into individuation which Jung describes in a way that has relevance to Alyosha's experience:

It is as if the guidance of life has passed over to an invisible centre . . . / and there is a / release from compulsion and impossible responsibility that are the inevitable results of participation mystique."<sup>11</sup>

Alyosha has lost all compulsion for ascetic saintliness. He leaves the monastery to take up a life of active love free of any preaching and moralizing, but only acting and reacting in love and understanding. He now acts from an inner centre that is autonomous and in harmony with all life-giving and life-affirming impulses. The fact that he leaves the monastery







does not detract from his resemblance to a holy fool; like the unholy fool or clown who exploits the ego's incongruities, thereby bringing them to consciousness in order to be laughed away, the holy fool achieves a similar human emancipation by affirming our spiritual integrity that is neither given to us nor taken away from us by the social group in which we live.<sup>12</sup>

With Alyosha's spiritual re-birth the inner temptations and ambiguities he previously sensed disappear. The other characters continue to struggle with their dual natures in which the paradox of love and hate seems to predominate. They frequently oscillate between these two opposites in some of their relationships: Dmitri and Katerina, Ivan and Dmitri, Katerina and Grushenka, Lise in her regard for Alyosha. But Alyosha never oscillates; he stands firm and fixed. Near the end he asserts that Rakitin is no longer his friend, but there is no suggestion of hate. The masochistic and sadistic Lise, probably Dostoevsky's most cruel portrayal of a woman, says she loves Alyosha, but does not respect him, a paradox indeed. When she observes that "everyone loves having killed his father," Alyosha calmly replies that there is "a grain of truth in it." This reply reflects Dostoevsky's view more accurately than the view that sees Dostoevsky deeply absorbed in the Oedipus phenomenon in The Brothers Karamazov. Freud said that in giving Smerdyakov epilepsy, a disease afflicting himself, Dostoevsky was identifying



with the desire to kill his father.<sup>13</sup> This may be, but one must not lose sight of the fact that the love-hate tension is not confined to father-son or mother-daughter relationships exclusively. Hate projections are reaction formations that often occur in casual acquaintances just as they occur in close friendships and even in husband-wife relationships. One can see this in children as well where in one moment two children are ready to tear each other apart in hate, and in the next, kiss and embrace each other. The hatred leading to parricide does not have a separate root in human psychology from the hatred producing any other act of violence, and the themes in The Brothers Karamazov seem to bear this out. Hate, pride, raw sensuality exist in human disposition as do love, humility, and spirituality. The former assert dominance, authority, egoism, in which the subject at a high level of consciousness feels superior to the object; the latter harmonize collectively in which the subject at a lower level of consciousness, modified by unconscious content, finds harmonious identity with the object. In the state where the subject is inferior to the object, there is a low level of consciousness as experienced in primitive man who submits to superstition and difficult responsibilities in fear of supernatural reprisals.<sup>14</sup> The nature of Alyosha's re-birth can be better understood if Jung's ideas are applied seriously to Dostoevsky's novel.



The murder of old Karamazov occurs at the same time as Alyosha's spiritual resurrection. Thus at a moment when raw sensuality is destroyed by the forces sensuality itself created, that is, Ivan and Smerdyakov,<sup>15</sup> Alyosha experiences a symbolic rebirth. But hate, pride, and raw sensuality are never completely destroyed; they continue to bring about suffering, and more important, the awakening sense of guilt. Who is guilty of Karamazov's murder? In a hierarchy arranged in accordance with the intensity of suffering, the order of the guilty would be Ivan, Dmitri, Smerdyakov, Alyosha,<sup>16</sup> and then, perhaps all mankind. Alyosha's guilt is, in a sense, as indirect as mankind's, but in another perspective, his preoccupation with Father Zossima's death, causing him to lose contact with Dmitri whom he had intended to seek out, places guilt upon him<sup>17</sup> more directly than upon the rest of the town's residents. Alyosha's neglect of a situation he knew was dangerous can be attributed to his zealous regard for an object (Zossima) that he held superior to the subject (himself) and other objects (his father and brothers). Alyosha's dream, in which he drinks the miracle "wine of gladness" with Zossima, and his mystical experience, in which heaven and earth merge with his soul, are significant in that no form of worship is involved, but in that a unity or identity of subject and object is realized. Alyosha's transformation is essentially one of immutable integration or identity in which





tensions disappear. He is no longer the praying, icon-worshipping saint, the obvious worshipper of Zossima and Christ; but he has identified with Christ and with life itself. His perceptions are intuitive; he knows that Dimitri and Ivan are not the physical murderers of his father, because he recognizes their basic goodness revealed by the intensity of their suffering. But he has also identified with the truth of collective guilt, which affirms his intrinsic attitude of individual non-condemnation. The affirmation of negative truth is revealed in Ivan's identity with the devil, who becomes real in Ivan's illusion brought on by intense suffering; there is a powerful symbolic significance in the fact that it is Alyosha's visit that releases Ivan from the clutches of his devil.

But it is perhaps in Alyosha's relationship with the children in the sub-plot that his new affirmation reveals itself most significantly. Kolya, a fourteen-year-old burgeoning Ivan, says of Alyosha, whom he has at this point not yet met:

"I'm surprised at the part Alexey Karamazov is playing in all this: his brother's going to be tried tomorrow or the day after tomorrow for such a crime and yet he has so much time to waste on being sentimental with boys." (616)

Of course we are aware that Alyosha is not neglecting his brothers, nor Ilyusha and his classmates, who, like the twelve disciples, have rallied around their symbolic Christ, little Ilyusha.<sup>18</sup> Kolya has not been in a hurry to make Alyosha's acquaintance, and although he has heard many favorable impressions





of him, his Euclidean mind has "formed a certain opinion of him which has still to be verified and explained." Kolya is with Alyosha only a few moments before he says:

"You, Karamazov, have made friends with all those little fellows haven't you? And that means you want to influence the younger generation, cultivate their minds, be useful to them, doesn't it? And I don't mind telling you that this trait in your character, which I knew from hearsay, appealed to me more than anything . . ." (625)

At another point in the same conversation he observes something else in Alyosha: "I can see you have a good idea what human nature is like." But the essential nature of Alyosha's attraction for Kolya and the other boys is his complete identity with them. This is how Kolya felt:

Kolya was extremely pleased with Alyosha. What struck him most was that Alyosha treated him as an equal and spoke to him as though he were quite "grown up." (630)

Alyosha identifies completely with the children as they do with him and therein functions effectively. He genuinely radiates the human spirit of harmonizing love and understanding and evokes a similar radiation from the hearts of those whose fountain of love and understanding has been restrained under the pressure of desire and ego. The precociously Euclidean Kolya thinks Alyosha is a mystic whom reality will cure, to which Alyosha asks, "What do you call a mystic? What will reality cure of me?" Kolya means it will cure him of God "and the rest of it." God for Kolya is just an hypothesis, but Alyosha identifies the individual's



belief in God with that individual's ability to love mankind.

Kolya also spurns Christianity, but his negation arouses in him a deeply genuine concern that Alyosha despises him for it:

"Despise you?" said Alyosha, looking at him with surprise.  
 "Why should I? I'm only sorry that a charming nature such as yours should have been perverted by all this crude nonsense before you've begun to live." (651)

Alyosha perceives the danger of imitation, of Kolya wanting to be like many others in the acceptance of cold intellectualism.

Alyosha stresses "one ought not to be like everyone else. That's the important thing." He points out that Kolya was actually not like everyone else because

"you weren't ashamed to confess a moment ago to something bad and even ridiculous. And who confesses to that nowadays? No one. People do not any longer feel the need of admitting that they're wrong. So don't be like everyone else, even if you are the only one who is not." (653-654)

In his contrast of individuation (psychic adjustment for harmonious collectivity) and individuality (uniqueness), Jung helps to resolve the seeming conflict between complete identity with people that Alyosha displays while at the same time encouraging individuality:

Now in so far as the human individual, as a living unit, is composed of purely universal factors, he is wholly collective and therefore in no sense opposed to collectivity. Hence the individualistic emphasis on one's own peculiarity is a contradiction of this basic fact of the living being. Individuation, on the other hand, aims at a living co-operation of all factors. But since the universal factors always appear only in individual form, a full consideration of them will also produce an individual effect, and one which cannot be surpassed by anything else, least of all by individualism.<sup>19</sup>



Individuality based on psychological integrity is essentially what Alyosha, like Jung, believes, and that is what he arouses in Kolya. The talk between these two equals has been "like a declaration of love," Kolya says, and Alyosha blushes. Both Kolya and Alyosha experience an identical, happy embarrassment in this truthful admission:

"Oh, I love and admire you this moment just because for some reason you feel shamed. Because you're just like me!" Kolya exclaimed with genuine delight. His cheeks were burning, his eyes sparkled. (654)

At this point Alyosha voices a sudden intuitive assessment of Kolya. "I can't help feeling that you'll be very unhappy in life." Kolya, like Ivan, is marked for suffering and guilt, the only path to redemption. Alyosha later reiterates his belief in resurrection, but apart from this, there is no transcendental stress in his faith.

To regard Alyosha as a mere holy fool or a symbol is not entirely adequate. He is rather an incarnation of human potential in which the tension of ambiguities is harmonized by an intrinsic love for life as opposed to a thirst for the meaning of life necessitated by the restless state of intellectual hyper-consciousness, and as also opposed to the deficient consciousness of distorted religious superstitions which create the tensions of impossible duties for salvation of the soul and appeasement of a vindictive deity. Alyosha embodies an ideal consciousness which balances the functions of sensation, thinking,





feeling, and intuition in a way that harmonizes human relations, enabling the individual to identify with, and understand, the child as well as the adult, the individual as well as all mankind. Such a balanced consciousness marks the presence of active love and the absence of condemnation for human weakness -- an absence that affirms human freedom, collective identity, and responsibility for the suffering and guilt of others; and it regenerates in us a sense of collectivity and spiritual integrity we often find throttled by an overwhelming egoism. Alyosha exemplifies perfectly Jung's concept of individuation, of the truly integrated self, that makes possible a collective identification latent in the conscious mind. Alyosha is not a clear figure of any religion, for his religion is mystical and personal; and even though he expresses it in Christian terminology, he is more akin to Buddha.<sup>20</sup>

Unlike Myshkin, Alyosha withdraws unharmed from the abyss of black passion and of intellectual negation upon which he has gazed. The horrifying sight of the abyss overwhelms the oversensitive Myshkin; his physical infirmity and his passive orientation make him vulnerable. Alyosha finds an immunity that does not relegate him to a passively compassionate role but, on the contrary, to an active one that attempts to prevent his fellow men from venturing beyond the threshold of this abyss.



## CONCLUSION

It seems the holy fool is a significant figure in human experience, but the reason for his significance is speculative. There is mystery in the nature of the higher wisdom which inspires him and because of which he is a fool or simpleton not measuring up to normal human standards. In the six holy fools discussed I have tried to show in some detail the peculiar idiosyncracies that make each one a fool, but the inspiration that makes each one holy is, of course, difficult to clarify since the divine is mysterious and inexplicable.

Extensive investigation cannot perhaps solve the divine mystery made most palpable and influential in the figure of Christ, but wider research would probably indicate that some highly creative minds have perceived the divine as mysteriously operative in the human psyche. Shakespeare in King Lear thematizes higher wisdom revealed in the individual who rejects egoism and finds identity with the fool. Lear's royal persona is dissolved in his madness and his crown is transformed into the coxcomb of the fool. Only then does he discover the higher truth of life and feel the transport of joy as he looks at the lifeless face of the Christ-like Cordelia. He affectionately calls her "my poor fool," and the joy which causes his mortal heart to burst



radiates from some mysterious light he sees in Cordelia's dead countenance. Cordelia bears resemblance to a holy fool as does Lear in death, not unlike Motes and Tarwater. Similarly, Shakespeare's Richard II approximates the figure of a holy fool although he experiences much difficulty with his conflicting self-love. And Hamlet, too, overwhelmed by the absurdity of his position, tries to lose his persona in madness and later finds that his "gorge rises" at the happy reminiscences evoked by the sight of poor Yorick's skull. Tolstoy's Pierre Bezuhov, hero of War and Peace, who was looked upon as somewhat of a boor and simpleton, loves everyone; and it is clear that everyone loves him. His humbleness and suffering eventually lead to an apocalyptic discovery of his true self, of an affirmation of life, and of a secure faith in God. There is also a figure of the holy fool in Faulkner's Benjamin in The Sound and the Fury; Benjamin, after suffering the injustice of Jason's violence, understands the mysteries of life which had endlessly flowed as pictures through his disordered mind.

But the ubiquity of the holy fool is hardly in question; it is his mystical attainment of meaning in life that is most intriguing. He is a fool because he does not assume any pretentiousness. This leaves him free to exploit his own absurdity; and without egoistic tension, his spiritual integrity is never challenged. Gimpel overcomes his last vestige of ego





when he is dissuaded from defiling the bread; Jacob rejects martyrdom because the altruism inspired in him is not to be resolved in egoism; Motes commits himself to his belief with an act of self-blinding that for the false Hawks was only a pretence; Tarwater sees beneath Rayber's mask and completely rejects his presumptive uncle; the genuous Myshkin feels guilt in merely sensing a premonition of evil in his avowed friend, Rogozhin; and Alyosha, influenced by his holy fool idol, Father Zossima, rejects monkhood because of its preternatural human detachment.

In his rejection of egoistic pretensions, the holy fool invests all his psychic energy in his feeling function; and as he exploits the evil that seems to obscure divine light, he discovers it unequivocally and vindicates his spiritual inspiration. Passion and violence do not necessarily negate the divine; O'Connor's most delinquent and motiveless criminals, for instance, the Bible salesman in "Good Country People" and the Misfit in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," fail to obliterate the redeeming image of Christ in their unconscious minds. In sharp contrast to these personifications of the human shadow, Christ stands out as a personification of human light; yet even He had to overcome the encroachment of evil in the form of Satan's temptations. None of the holy fool heroes discussed in the foregoing chapters escapes the jolting effect of intrusive evil; but in the final





analysis, all, except perhaps Myshkin, emerge from the struggle with re-affirmation of their spiritual integrity.

It also seems noteworthy that there should be an affinity between Singer's Judaic heroes and Christ. Both Gimpel and Jacob submit to suffering and servility with steadfast, divine-like love for mankind excelled only in Christ. While they do not have a redeeming figure of Him in their convictions, Gimpel and Jacob themselves approximate His image and affirm the divine grace that He embodied.

In the course of their lives, however, Gimpel, Jacob, Motes, Tarwater, and Myshkin never attain the psychic harmony that is characterized in Alyosha. He is the ideal individual, the ultimate of human potential in approximating the figure of Christ. Perhaps Alyosha's image is unattainable for most individuals as it is for Gimpel, Jacob, Motes, Tarwater, and Myshkin; but this is not to say that they are vastly inferior to Alyosha -- or perhaps even to Christ. All these heroes function as redeemers because they all lure us into the region of the spirit, where the light of meaningful existence steadfastly shines.

The incongruities of life in the individual, in society, and in nature are represented in the holy fool as some abnormal condition: thus the stupid Gimpel, the hallucinated Jacob, the demented Motes and Tarwater, the apoplectic Myshkin, and the madly simple Alyosha. The abnormality functions as a modulator



that asserts the power of an intensified feeling function in the psyche leading to intuitive or mystical perception of invisible truth and an affirmation of a spiritual faith essential to giving meaning and purpose to life. To some extent the holy fool displays a kind of passivity indicative of anti-Prometheanism, a disbelief in the effectiveness of striving, defiance, pride, and also doubt in the efficacy of knowledge or wisdom.<sup>1</sup> This is particularly apparent in Gimpel, Motes, and Myshkin, the earlier creations of each of the artists I have discussed. Yet there is a paradoxical assertion of a Promethean urge in each, the desire to function as a redeemer of mankind -- an urge which becomes more pronounced in the artists' later images of Jacob, Tarwater, and Alyosha. Jacob feels compelled to servitude among the gentiles, Tarwater to the prophecy of the speed of God's mercy for the children of God, and Alyosha to active love among mankind.

But this Prometheanism is not the image of the rebel, the introverted expression of what Adlerian psychology calls the will-to-power seeking egoistic gratification of this desire. The Prometheanism of the holy fool lies in his power to find meaning and purpose in life through intuitive perception of an invisible divinity imbedded in the seeming absurdities of human existence. The superficial power of conscious human sense perceptions is inadequate to discover the light of meaning. Men who in their pride of intellect have put all their trust in this



superficial power of the conscious mind encounter inevitable frustration. The holy fool functions as a Promethean redeemer by reminding his fellow men of the gift of inherent intuitive perception with which they are endowed. If they are to attain true individuality and personal integrity, they cannot repudiate the validity of this intuitive power.

Such intuition leads to the acquisition of a highly personalized religion that transcends formalized religious creeds. Thus Singer visualizes Jacob as a Judaic redeemer among gentiles, O'Connor with her strong Catholic convictions visualizes redemptive grace fully operative in Protestant fundamentalists, and Dostoevsky synthesizes Christian sentiments in the quasi-Buddhistic figure of Alyosha. In the final analysis, the holy fool seems to be an archetype of genuine individuality in whom all the functions of mind are harmoniously operative, enabling him to perceive the meaningfulness of human existence.





## FOOTNOTES

### Introduction

<sup>1</sup>Gordon, Literature in Critical Perspectives, 499-503. This author also refers to the mythical or archetypal school of criticism led by Northrop Frye, Leslie Fiedler, Richard Chase, and Stanley Edgar Hyman. The fact that I have not referred to these scholars for primary material in this study is not owing to my ignorance of their scholarship in a related field, but is owing to my concern with a specific archetype; they, on the other hand, are more concerned with a mythic interpretation of literature generally.

<sup>2</sup>Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, 255-272.

<sup>3</sup>This summary is primarily taken from Jung's Two Essays on Analytical Psychology in the chapter in the appendices called "The Structure of the Unconscious," 277-304. However, other references have been used as indicated by subsequent footnotes.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 75-76.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>6</sup>In this paragraph I am primarily using Fordham's interpretation in her book An Introduction to Jung's Psychology, 49-52.

<sup>7</sup>Jung, Two Essays, 220-221.

<sup>8</sup>Fordham, Introduction to Jung's Psychology, 17.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 18-20. In the interest of brevity, the content of this paragraph summarizes primarily Fordham's interpretation of Jung in this particular aspect of his theory.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 64-65.



<sup>12</sup>Jung, Two Essays, 297.

<sup>13</sup>I am again using Fordham's interpretation in Introduction to Jung's Psychology, Ch. 2, "Psychological Types," 29-46. She summarizes from Jung's book Psychological Types. To minimize footnotes, I refer the reader to Fordham's book for any statements I make in this section on Jung's theory of types.

<sup>14</sup>Jung, Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, in the chapter "On the Psychology of the Trickster-Figure," 255-272.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 263-264.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 255. Italics are mine.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 265.

## Chapter I

<sup>1</sup>Irving H. Buchen, "Isaac Bashevis Singer and the Eternal Past," Critique, VIII (1966), 6.

<sup>2</sup>Dan Jacobson, "The Problem of Isaac Bashevis Singer," Commentary, XXXIX (1965), 51.

<sup>3</sup>Irving Howe, "I.B. Singer," Encounter, XXVI (1966), 63-65.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>6</sup>Welsford, The Fool, 318.

<sup>7</sup>Jung, Two Essays, 182-183.

<sup>8</sup>Lewis, The Lion and the Fox, 221-222.



- <sup>9</sup>Fordham, Introduction to Jung's Psychology, 41-42.

## Chapter II

- <sup>1</sup>Flannery O'Connor, "The Fiction Writer and His Country," Granville Hicks, ed., The Living Novel, a Symposium, 162.

- <sup>2</sup>Stuart L. Burns, "Flannery O'Connor's The Violent Bear It Away," Sewanee Review, LXXVI (1968), 336. In future notes, SR indicates Sewanee Review.

- <sup>3</sup>J. Oates Smith, "Ritual and Violence in Flannery O'Connor," Thought, XLI (1966), 546.

- <sup>4</sup>John Hawkes, "Flannery O'Connor's Devil," SR, LXX (1962), 395-407.

- <sup>5</sup>Ted R. Spiney, "Flannery O'Connor's View of God and Man," Studies in Short Fiction, I (1963-64), 205.

- <sup>6</sup>Caroline Gordon, "Heresy in Dixie," SR, LXXVI (1968), 290.

- <sup>7</sup>Lewis A. Lawson, "Flannery O'Connor and the Grotesque," Renascence, XVII (1965), 137.

- <sup>8</sup>Caroline Gordon, "Heresy in Dixie," SR, LXXVI (1968), 270-289.

- <sup>9</sup>Jung, Two Essays, 183.

- <sup>10</sup>J. Oates Smith, "Ritual and Violence in Flannery O'Connor," Thought, XLI (1966), 554-555.

- <sup>11</sup>Ruth Van de Kieft, "Judgment in the Fiction of Flannery O'Connor," Sewanee Review, LXXVI (1968), 345. Tarwater's death is apparently implied at the end of the story.

## Chapter III

- <sup>1</sup>Mark Spilka, "Human Worth in The Brothers Karamazov," Minnesota Review, V (1965), 38-49.



- <sup>2</sup>Carr, Dostoevsky, 207.
- <sup>3</sup>Jung, Two Essays, 63-64.
- <sup>4</sup>Fordham, Introduction to Jung's Psychology, 53.
- <sup>5</sup>Jochanen Wijnhoven, "The Mysticism of Solomon Ibn Gabriel," Journal of Religion, XLV (1965), 146.
- <sup>6</sup>Jung, The Archetypes, 256.
- <sup>7</sup>Gasset, The Dehumanization of Art, 72.
- <sup>8</sup>Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, 78.
- <sup>9</sup>Passage, Dostoevski the Adapter, 166.
- <sup>10</sup>Jung, Basic Writings, 434.
- <sup>11</sup>Jung, Psyche and Symbol, 343-350. Jung defines participation mystique as a primordial condition in which the subject does not identify with the object resulting in superstitious tension.
- <sup>12</sup>Welsford, The Fool, 323.
- <sup>13</sup>Sigmund Freud, "Dostoevsky and Parricide," The Realist, I (1929), 12-18.
- <sup>14</sup>This explanation is again based upon Jung's concept of participation mystique.
- <sup>15</sup>Wasiolek, Dostoevsky: the Major Fiction, 171-177.
- <sup>16</sup>Hingley, The Undiscovered Dostoevsky, 201-202.
- <sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 202.





<sup>18</sup>Rimvydas Silbajoris, "The Children in The Brothers Karamazov," Slavic and East European Journal, VII (1963), 37.

<sup>19</sup>Jung, Two Essays, 183.

<sup>20</sup>William Hamilton, "A Study of Dostoevski's Religious Vision," Journal of Religion, XXXIX (1959), 259.

### Conclusion

<sup>1</sup>Irving Howe, "I.B. Singer," Encounter, XXXVI (1966), 68-70.



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